

BREAKING NEWS

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Community News

In brief: Berkeley Humane, Oakland schools helping families in need feed pets

By **COMPILED BY EAST BAY TIMES** |

PUBLISHED: April 15, 2020 at 9:50 a.m. | UPDATED: April 15, 2020 at 9:53 a.m.

BERKELEY/OAKLAND

Humane Society, schools helping families feed their pets

Families in need can now pick up dog and cat food at Oakland Unified School District food distribution sites. This new initiative between the Berkeley-East Bay Humane Society (Berkeley Humane), the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) and World Central Kitchen extends Berkeley Humane's Pet Food Pantry across Oakland, starting at Elmhurst United Middle School and moving to food distribution sites across the city. Already, more than 1800 pounds of food have been distributed to various distribution sites.

Compassion, kindness, and concern for each other is everything right now — and that includes for the pets in our community. Though many of Berkeley Humane's programs are suspended due to the COVID-19 health crisis, their Pet Food Pantry has remained a top priority. Over the last three weeks, Berkeley

Humane has seen a sharp increase in requests for food from the pantry, pointing to the very real financial impact COVID-19 is already having on families and people who have few resources. When people must choose between feeding themselves or feeding their pets, they often will go hungry to make sure their pets are fed.

With all the shelter animals in foster homes, the Berkeley Humane volunteers who normally clean litter boxes and walk dogs are coming together, wearing protective gear and adhering to all social distancing guidelines to create food packages for dogs, cats, puppies and kittens. These packages are delivered to Oakland Unified schools' food distribution sites, where they are offered to all families.

World Central Kitchen has established 12 locations throughout Oakland to provide healthy food to area families in conjunction with Oakland Unified. IFAW was eager to join forces once again with World Central Kitchen by supporting and connecting Berkeley Humane's Pet Food Pantry to this feeding program, addressing the growing need to get pet food to those who need it most.

— *Berkeley Humane*

ALBANY

Senior meals delivery-only, sewer works starts next week

The Albany CARES Program continues to provide food and housing assistance to those in need. Meals previously available for pickup at the Senior Center will now be delivered through the city's Meals on Wheels program for our residents' safety. Call 510-524-9122 to sign up for Meals on Wheels and get meals delivered to you.

The Public Works Department continues to conduct essential city maintenance while taking additional precautions and complying with social distancing requirements. Sewer cleaning and inspection work is scheduled to begin next week in the locations indicated online at [bayareane.ws/2yW6efo](https://www.bayareane.ws/2yW6efo). This work is vital to prevent sewer system blockages and overflows. Please follow posted signage for your own safety and to ensure the project moves quickly.

— *city of Albany*

BERKELEY

City offers help managing mental health during lockdown

The outbreak of COVID-19 creates concerns for all of us and may prompt feelings of anxiety, worry, anger, difficulty sleeping and concentrating, and hyper-vigilance to your health and body. The shelter-in-place order, while necessary to protect the health of our entire community, may bring challenges to the support systems we rely on in difficult times. Signs of stress are normal, and it is important to care for your own physical and mental health and reach out in kindness to those affected by the situation.

In this moment, staying home is the most important thing we need to do to protect our community. Coping with stress while staying at home will make you, the people you care about and our community stronger. Understanding the facts about COVID-19 and the actual risk to yourself and people you care about can make an outbreak less stressful. Turn to trusted sources for information such as the CDC, WHO, or the City of Berkeley for accurate information. Share information with loved ones.

Watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media, about the pandemic can be upsetting. Be sure to take a break from the news and engage in activities you find relaxing and enjoyable. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, get plenty of sleep and avoid alcohol and drugs. Exercise regularly while adhering to the need to practice social distancing. Residents can exercise in their homes. Enjoy open spaces in large parks alone or with members of your household.

Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you're feeling. Stay in touch with members outside your household through the phone, video chat and other communication tools. If you or a loved one feels overwhelmed with emotions, the Berkeley Mental Health Crisis Triage Line is 510-981-5244, at which callers can speak to a local mental health professional for support and resources over the phone from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Visit [cityofberkeley.info/covid19](https://www.cityofberkeley.info/covid19) for more information on COVID-19, recommendations from Berkeley's Public Health Department and changes to city services.

— *city of Berkeley*

COVID-19 testing site opens for essential workers, others

As part of the city of Berkeley's multifaceted response to COVID-19, we are opening a testing site in partnership with LifeLong Medical and UC Berkeley for vulnerable community members including those without access to health care as well as firefighters, nurses, police officers and other essential city employees.

Testing for all is not necessary. This new virus may cause mild, if any, symptoms to the vast majority of people, many of whom should stay home and take care of themselves unless their symptoms worsen. Everyone should stay home, except for the most essential activities. I ask those of you who have a health care provider to please not come to the site. That will let us focus on serving critical needs during this time. For those who don't have a healthcare provider and have concerns, you can call LifeLong Medical Care at 510-981-4100 to see if testing is appropriate.

Testing vulnerable people in Berkeley and our first responders can prevent spread among high-risk groups as well as those essential city employees who must be in contact with people infected with COVID-19 and the general public. Testing will also give us a better understanding of the workings of this virus in Berkeley. The ongoing testing shortage means that the lab-confirmed positive cases are just a fraction of the actual picture. This testing site as well as one that started this week at UC Berkeley will help build up our data, which is crucial information that fuels another part of our work: developing scientific models to determine how and when cases may increase and how to prepare for those outcomes.

The most important information for the public remains the same: stay home except for essential activities. This helps prevent a surge in hospitalizations that would otherwise overwhelm our system and leave hospitalized patients without ventilators and support systems. I thank all of you who are following the orders. Please continue to do so. We are on a good path in a treacherous time, but we are not at the end.

— *Lisa B. Hernandez, M.D., M.P.H., Berkeley Health Officer*

ALBANY

City still providing essential services during shutdown

While all nonessential city meetings and events have been canceled and city facilities are closed to the public through May 3, the city of Albany continues to provide essential services to the community. The Albany CARES Program continues to provide food and housing assistance. Call the information line at 510-524-9122 for details.

The Public Works Department will continue to conduct essential city maintenance on an ongoing basis while ensuring compliance with social distancing requirements and other protective measures. The Community Development Department continues to operate with modified procedures and will continue to process planning applications, building permit applications and conduct inspections for activities allowed under the shelter-in-place order. If you have specific questions about how the order affects your project, email com-dev@albanyca.org.

– city of Albany

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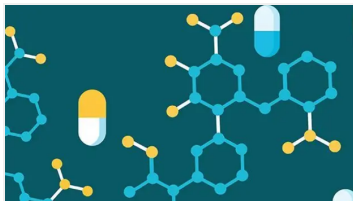
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